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SUBJECT: MADAGASCAR'S MAPUTO DEAL: SHAKY SUPPORT, BUT STILL INTACT

REF: A. 09 ANTANANARIVO 586

1B. 09 ANTANANARIVO 589

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Classified By: CHARGE ERIC STROMAYER FOR REASONS 1.4 B AND D.

11. (C) SUMMARY: Four days after Madagascar's feuding political leaders reached agreement at talks in Maputo (reftel B), a majority of the population appears to cautiously accept it as a good first step - but significant opposition remains among factions that stand to lose out once the deal is finalized in the coming weeks. The leadership of the four main political movements continue to defend the accords, and the military has expressed that it is generally "satisfied" with the outcome, with a few reservations. However, members of the current regime have begun speaking out against their upcoming displacement in favor of a unity government, and factions not included in Maputo are displeased with their loss of influence. Nothing has yet happened to derail the planned Maputo II talks next week, but nor has Maputo I been greeted as warmly as the mediators were hoping. END SUMMARY.

ANXIOUS POLITICIANS NOT QUITE READY TO LEAVE OFFICE

12. (C) The greatest opposition to the Transition Charter and accompanying political agreements (henceforth, "the accords") has come, predictably, from within the current High Transitional Authority (HAT) of Andry Rajoelina. Although he has downplayed the compromises made in Maputo and appears to want the accords to succeed, many of those who came to power on his coattails are concerned about what they rightly see as an imminent decline in their influence. A Maputo II summit of the four leaders is planned for next week (although it may be postponed) in which the four movements will divide up the positions foreseen in the accords - and up to three quarters of the current government will most likely have to cede their place to one of the other movements (reftel B).

13. (C) Leading this opposition is a new group of politicians calling itself the Forces for Change - although its goal is to maintain the status quo to the greatest extent possible, and legitimize the current transition government in the context of the accords. Composed mostly of members of the current HAT, and led by Pasteur Richard Andriamanjato (AKFM party) and Manasse Esoavelomandroso (Leader Fanilo party), their position is that HAT President Andry Rajoelina and Prime Minister Roindéfo Monja should remain in their current jobs, and the HAT should retain a majority of government positions. They denounce what they see as "foreign interference" in Maputo, and have disguised their distaste

for compromise as nationalist pride - in their version, Rajoelina and his team won a "democratic revolution" against former President Ravalomanana, and the mediators have no right to question their authority or force the old guard back into power. Rajoelina himself retains the support of those within his government who recognize that compromise is the only hope for a stable transition, but the Forces for Change has grown louder in the days since Maputo, and will likely continue to make their case up to, and through, Maputo II.

STILL WAITING FOR CONFIDENCE BUILDING

¶4. (C) The media has grown slowly more concerned as well, after initially greeting the accords with optimism. On Tuesday and Wednesday, the papers began focusing on the sketchy details of Ravalomanana's return and possible amnesty, as well as the political reality of dividing up jobs in the transition government. By Thursday, the accords were already "being reconsidered" by the HAT, according to the generally pro-Rajoelina daily La Gazette. None of the movements' leadership have backed away from the accords yet, however, and Rajoelina himself is scheduled for a television appearance on August 14 to discuss his vision of what was agreed upon. He has been noticeably silent all week, and much depends on what he says in this appearance: according to his advisors, he remains firmly behind the accords, despite the growing rift within his own movement.

¶5. (C) As the planned Maputo II draws closer, Ravalomanana's supporters in particular are watching the HAT for signs of good faith. Edem Kodjo, the Francophonie's representative in the mediation group, was in Madagascar on August 11 to answer questions on the accords, and he was categorical that current political detainees being held by the HAT should be released "immediately", with some allowance for procedural issues.

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This would include, at a minimum, Ravalomanana's appointed shadow prime minister, Manandafy Rakotonirina, as well as the leader of the Legalist Women, Ihanta Randriamandranto. There are also four TIM-party parliamentarians that have been in prison since April, and a case could be made for an additional four who were arrested in July in connection with recent "terrorist" threats in Antananarivo - but have yet to be charged. To date, no action has been taken, and the Maputo accords have in fact been used as an excuse for further delay. In the case of the four parliamentarians specifically, the court ruled on August 12 to postpone their case further "in order to examine the implications of the Maputo accords". For those who have been detained but not charged yet, media reports have relayed a view that they can't be amnestied until they've been charged - leaving them in a difficult legal limbo. Ravalomanana's supporters are growing frustrated with this approach: having canceled their daily Magro rallies as a show of good faith, they are anxious to see reciprocal confidence-building moves from the HAT.

¶6. (C) A group of civil society organizations came out in favor of the accords on August 13, as did army chief Andre Ndriarijoana on August 12. Several top representatives of the security forces on August 13 issued a joint statement generally supporting the accords, but with a caveat: they disagree with Article 22 of the Charter, which permits each of the four political movements to name members to a new "Think Tank on National Defense and Security" that would have oversight and planning functions. They propose instead that the armed forces themselves designate their representatives - essentially removing a level of civilian control over the military (NOTE: It is also unlikely that they envision the replacement of the current Minister of the Armed Forces, Noel Rakotonandrasana, although this wasn't discussed. END NOTE). More problematic still was a separate declaration from Minister of Interior Security Organes Rakotomihantarizaka and the Director General of the National Police in which they align themselves roughly with the position of the Forces for Change - Rajoelina and Monja stay in their positions, and

Ravalomanana's shouldn't come back in the near future.
Comment: From their statements it is unclear whether they are expressing their views with the hope they will be duly registered in further discussions, or if they actually intend or are able of taking actions against Rajoelina and the HAT if he stands by the agreements as signed. In either case they are intended to intimidate. End comment.

17. (C) According to sources within the HAT, PM Monja is reportedly lobbying extensively within the government to keep his job, but doesn't appear to be undermining the accords publicly, and has refrained from making any statements to the media. Alain Ramaroson, a divisive figure who currently heads the HAT's defense committee and is widely accused of involvement with some of the more abusive security force activity in recent months, has been notably silent as well. Jean Eugene Voninahitsy (RPSD party) has distinguished himself as the only member of a delegation in Maputo (with the HAT) to be actively working against the accords; he has essentially signed on to the Forces for Change position.

THE HAT, PLAYING WITH FIRE

18. (C) COMMENT: Maputo II is intended to focus on dividing up some 550 jobs in the transition, but at the present rate either Rajoelina or Ravalomanana will be forced to reopen issues that were already "closed" in Maputo I - at the risk of derailing the process entirely. If the HAT doesn't release any political detainees, Ravalomanana's supporters will be unlikely to support a second round of talks at all. If the Forces for Change, or some element of the security forces, hold firm on demands that the HAT retain the presidency, prime ministership, and a majority of other posts, the other three movements will all find it difficult to justify continued participation to their supporters. At present, a majority of Malagasy political forces remain in favor of Maputo II, even if their optimism is at best cautious. However, Rajoelina must quickly gain control over his fracturing movement, or Maputo II may not even occur. END COMMENT.

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